SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

- Encourage main street and downtown revitalization in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the natural resources and cultural heritage.

- Encourage economic development and improved opportunities for employment.

- Encourage development where transportation, water, sewer and central services already exist.

- Encourage within each municipality population patterns to complement the natural environment, helping to preserve and protect such natural resources as potable water, wetlands, aquifers, floodplains, estuaries, river corridors, forest and agricultural lands.

- Promote opportunities for decent, affordable housing for all citizens

- Provide a variety of transportation options that reduce congestion and auto pollution and enable low-income residents to have full access to the existing job market

- Preserve and protect cultural, historic and archeological resources, including its traditional development patterns, recognizing their cultural and economic significance, efficiency and contributions to a sense of place.

- Promote Smart Growth and protection of open space resources including access to water bodies and better integration of open space features into communities, both for recreation enjoyment and improvement of daily quality of life.

- Ensure the consideration of regional needs and the regional impaces of development in local planning and decision-making, and strengthen the partnership among state, regional, county and local decision-makers to improve opportunities for positive growth and effective land management.

- Ensure permit predictability in building and land use codes as in incentive to streamline financing and approval of development that supports Smart Growth principles.

- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

Community Participation

Smart Growth began with a group of citizens who wanted to go beyond just reacting to development proposals; citizens who wanted to proactively shape the decisions that effect their communities and hence, their lives. Community participation remains at the heart of Smart Growth through opportunities that bring together all stakeholders in a community:

The community visioning process helps participants envision different development options through a presentation of different land use and planning options for streets, housing, public space, etc. After viewing a variety of images, participants register their preferences and vote on a development model for their own community.

Charettes are planning workshops in which interdisciplinary teams join to design a project: residents, builders, developers, planners, police and fire personnel, clergy, business owners, etc. People who would perhaps otherwise never interact come together to brainstorm and design their community, offering input that is listened to and considered. Working over a period of several days, they develop a common language and produce sketches and plans that are the basis of a development plan.

Charettes can be used to create a vision and plan for large topics such as transportation or housing, or can focus on specific, small geographic areas (commonly within a quarter-mile walking radius) or on "Main Street" of specific, pressing needs such as traffic calming.

Community participation is fostered through the efforts of known and respected community leaders: for example, Chambers of Commerce, clergy, school leaders, and non-partisan good government groups encourage residents to get involved in these processes because they offer the refreshing and unique opportunity to express concerns and offer insights that will be seriously regarded. In order to build consensus, charrette events engage participants in activities that build common values and they are only permitted to work on values commonly help by the group; problems and issues that are seen as group priority. The resulting designs benefit all stakeholders.

These processes ensure that development is equitable and has the support of the stakeholders of a community, while fostering new connections between community residents